

**Lesson:** Misapplied Visual Separation

**Reference Document:** JO 7110.65, Para 7-2-1, Visual Separation

## Section 2. Visual Separation

### 7-2-1. VISUAL SEPARATION

Aircraft may be separated by visual means, as provided in this paragraph, when other approved separation is assured before and after the application of visual separation. To ensure that other separation will exist, consider aircraft performance, wake turbulence, closure rate, routes of flight, and known weather conditions. Reported weather conditions must allow the aircraft to remain within sight until other separation exists. Do not apply visual separation between successive departures when departure routes and/or aircraft performance preclude maintaining separation.

#### **REFERENCE—**

*FAAO JO 7110.65, Para 2-1-20, Wake Turbulence Cautionary Advisories.*

*FAAO JO 7110.65, Para 2-1-21, Traffic Advisories.*

*FAAO JO 7110.65, Para 3-1-9, Use of Tower Radar Displays.*

*FAAO JO 7110.65, Para 5-9-5, Approach Separation Responsibility.*

*FAAO JO 7110.65, Para 7-4-1, Visual Approach.*

*FAAO JO 7110.65, Para 7-4-2, Vectors for Visual Approach.*

*FAAO JO 7110.65, Para 7-4-4, Approaches to Multiple Runways.*

*P/CG Term— Visual Approach.*

*P/CG Term— Visual Separation.*

**a. TERMINAL.** Visual separation may be applied between aircraft up to but not including FL180 under the following conditions:

#### **1. Tower-applied visual separation.**

**(a)** Maintain communication with at least one of the aircraft involved or ensure there is

an ability to communicate immediately as prescribed in paragraph 3-9-3, Departure Control Instructions,

subparagraph a2.

**(b)** The tower visually observes the aircraft, issues timely traffic advisories, and maintains visual separation between the aircraft. The use of tower-applied visual separation is not authorized when wake turbulence separation is required.

**(c)** Issue subsequent control instructions as necessary to ensure continued separation between the applicable aircraft.

**NOTE—***Adjacent airports with operating ATCTs are not authorized to apply visual separation between their traffic and the other ATCT's traffic.*

#### **2. Pilot-applied visual separation.**

**(a)** Maintain communication with at least one of the aircraft involved and ensure there is an ability to communicate with the other aircraft.

**(b)** The pilot sees another aircraft and is instructed to maintain visual separation from the aircraft as follows:

**(1)** Tell the pilot about the other aircraft. Include position, direction, and, unless it is obvious,

the other aircraft's intention.

**(2)** Obtain acknowledgment from the pilot that the other aircraft is in sight.

**(3)** Instruct the pilot to maintain visual separation from that aircraft.

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**PHRASEOLOGY–**

*TRAFFIC, (clock position and distance), (direction) BOUND, (type of aircraft), (intentions and other relevant information).*

*DO YOU HAVE IT IN SIGHT? If the answer is in the affirmative, MAINTAIN VISUAL SEPARATION.*

(c) If the pilot advises he/she has the traffic in sight and will maintain visual separation from it (the pilot must use that entire phrase), the controller need only “approve” the operation instead of restating the instructions.

**PHRASEOLOGY–APPROVED.**

*NOTE–Pilot-applied visual separation between aircraft is achieved when the controller has instructed the pilot to maintain visual separation and the pilot acknowledges or when the controller has approved pilot-initiated visual separation.*

**REFERENCE–**

*FAAO JO 7110.65, Para 5-4-5, Transferring Controller Handoff*

(d) If the aircraft are on converging courses, inform the other aircraft of the traffic and that visual separation is being applied.

**PHRASEOLOGY–**

*TRAFFIC, (clock position and distance), (direction)*

*BOUND, (type of aircraft), HAS YOU IN SIGHT AND WILL MAINTAIN VISUAL SEPARATION.*

(e) Advise the pilots if the radar targets appear likely to merge. JO 7110.65V 4/3/14 7-2-2 Visual Separation

*NOTE–Issue this advisory in conjunction with the instruction to maintain visual separation, the advisory to the other aircraft of the converging course, or thereafter if the*

*controller subsequently becomes aware that the targets are merging.*

**EXAMPLE–** “Radar targets appear likely to merge.”

**b. TERMINAL.** Control of aircraft maintaining visual separation may be transferred to an adjacent position/sector/facility. Coordination procedures must be specified in an LOA or facility directive.

**REFERENCE–**

*FAAO JO 7210.3, Para 4-3-1, Letters of Agreement*

**c. EN ROUTE.** Visual separation may be used up to but not including FL 180 when the following

conditions are met:

**1.** Direct communication is maintained with one of the aircraft involved and there is an ability to communicate with the other.

**2.** A pilot sees another aircraft and is instructed to maintain visual separation from it as follows:

(a) Tell the pilot about the other aircraft including position, direction and unless it is obvious, the other aircraft’s intentions.

(b) Obtain acknowledgment from the pilot that the other aircraft is in sight.

(c) Instruct the pilot to maintain visual separation from that aircraft.

(d) Advise the pilot if the radar targets appear likely to converge.

(e) If the aircraft are on converging courses, inform the other aircraft of the traffic and that visual separation is being applied.

(f) Advise the pilots if either aircraft is a heavy.

(g) Traffic advisories and wake turbulence cautionary advisories must be issued in accordance with para 2-1-20, Wake

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Turbulence Cautionary Advisories, and para 2-1-21, Traffic Advisories.

(h) If the pilot advises he/she has the traffic in sight and will maintain visual separation from it (the pilot must use that entire phrase), the controller need only “approve” the operation instead of restating the instructions.

**PHRASEOLOGY–**

*TRAFFIC, (clock position and distance), (direction)–BOUND, (type of aircraft), (intentions and other relevant information).*

*If applicable, ON CONVERGING COURSE.*

*DO YOU HAVE IT IN SIGHT? If the answer is in the affirmative, MAINTAIN VISUAL SEPARATION.*

*If the pilot advises he/she has the traffic in sight and will maintain visual separation from it (pilot must use that entire phrase):*

*(Call Sign) APPROVED. If aircraft are on converging courses, advise the other aircraft:*

*TRAFFIC, (clock position and distance), (direction)–BOUND, (type of aircraft), HAS YOU IN*

*SIGHT AND WILL MAINTAIN VISUAL SEPARATION.*

**REFERENCE–**

*FAAO JO 7110.65, Para 7-4-1, Visual Approach.*

*FAAO JO 7110.65, Para 7-4-2, Vectors for Visual Approach.*

**d.** Nonapproach control towers may be authorized to provide visual separation between aircraft within surface areas or designated areas provided other separation is assured before and after the application of visual separation. This may be applied by the nonapproach control tower providing the separation or by a pilot visually observing

another aircraft and being instructed to maintain visual separation with that aircraft.

**PHRASEOLOGY–**

*VISUAL SEPARATION APPROVED BETWEEN (identification) AND (identification), and for departing aircraft, (departing/succeeding aircraft) RELEASED YOUR DISCRETION.*

**NOTE–***Separation of IFR aircraft before and after application of visual separation is an IFR control function (Approach/Departure/En Route). A nonapproach control tower by accepting authorization for visual separation becomes responsible for ensuring that separation. Separation 4/3/14 JO 7110.65V Visual Separation 7-2-3 requirements also apply to VFR aircraft when IFR, Class B, Class C or TRSA separation is prescribed.*

**REFERENCE–**

*FAAO JO 7110.65, Para 4-8-11, Practice Approaches.*

*FAAO JO 7110.65, Para 5-6-1, Application.*

*FAAO JO 7110.65, Para 7-4-2, Vectors for Visual Approach.*

*FAAO JO 7110.65, Para 7-6-1, Application.*

*FAAO JO 7110.65, Para 7-7-1, Application.*

*FAAO JO 7110.65, Para 7-7-2, Issuance of EFC.*

*FAAO JO 7110.65, Para 7-7-3, Separation.*

*FAAO JO 7110.65, Para 7-7-4, Helicopter Traffic.*

*FAAO JO 7110.65, Para 7-7-5, Altitude Assignments.*

*FAAO JO 7110.65, Para 7-7-6, Approach Interval.*

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*FAAO JO 7110.65, Para 7-7-7, TRSA  
Departure Information.*

*FAAO JO 7110.65, Para 7-8-2, Class C  
Services.*

*FAAO JO 7110.65, Para 7-8-3,  
Separation.*

*FAAO JO 7110.65, Para 7-8-4,  
Establishing Two-Way Communications.*

*FAAO JO 7110.65, Para 7-8-5, Altitude  
Assignments.*

*FAAO JO 7110.65, Para 7-8-6,  
Exceptions.*

*FAAO JO 7110.65, Para 7-9-1,  
Application.*

*FAAO JO 7110.65, Para 7-9-3, Methods.*

*FAAO JO 7110.65, Para 7-9-4,  
Separation.*

*FAAO JO 7110.65, Para 7-9-6, Helicopter  
Traffic.*

*FAAO JO 7110.65, Para 7-9-7, Altitude  
Assignments.*